

# Planning for the Future

## Solid Waste in Ramsey County

S A I N T P A U L – R A M S E Y C O U N T Y P U B L I C H E A L T H

### Ramsey County Solid Waste Master Plan

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency establishes goals for recycling and waste management. Counties are responsible to meet these goals.

The Ramsey County Solid Waste Master Plan guides how we reduce waste, increase recycling and divert waste from landfills. The Master Plan outlines how we work with residents, businesses and partners to meet these state and county goals. The plan is updated every six years.

### The Plan focuses on...

- 1) Reducing risk to environmental and public health.
- 2) Accountability: all people are responsible for the waste they produce.
- 3) Government as a leader in properly handling waste.
- 4) Waste as a resource that is recovered to produce energy.
- 5) Waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting which are preferred over landfills.
- 6) Product stewardship to minimize the health, safety and environmental impacts of a product and its packaging.
- 7) Partnering with businesses to reduce waste.
- 8) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### Important things to note:

- In the East Metro, the public and private sectors collaborate on waste decisions.
- Residents and businesses pay haulers nearly \$120 million annually to collect waste.
- The private industry competes to provide trash and recycling collection.
- These companies support more than 500 local jobs.



## The evolution of solid waste master planning

**The waste management system in Minnesota has evolved over time.** Beginning with sanitation concerns, the Solid Waste Act of 1969 aimed to control open burning, vermin and water runoff. It also began the movement from open dumps to landfills. By the 1970s, environmental concern expanded to groundwater contamination. These concerns eventually evolved into the Waste Management Act (WMA) of 1980. This is the current framework for waste management policy in Minnesota.

**The overall goal of the WMA is to protect environmental and public health.** The WMA also outlines ways to improve how waste is managed. The WMA is rooted in reducing and managing risk to the environment, public health and the economy by encouraging the state to adopt a more integrated waste management system. Furthermore, to promote movement away from landfills, the WMA also includes a hierarchy of waste management methods.

Therefore, Minnesota has three primary waste management goals:

- (1) Create an integrated system.
- (2) Manage waste appropriately.
- (3) Protect environmental and public health.

**Since the adoption of the WMA, a successful system has emerged in Ramsey County.** We've seen significant advances in material, water and energy conservation. Regulations and incentives have reduced the toxicity of the waste stream. Finally, the public is well-informed and supportive of the system.

**The MPCA oversees how Ramsey County enacts the WMA.** The MPCA provides a framework and approves the county's solid waste master plans. These plans are revised regularly and include feedback from public engagement and discussion. The master plans also establish clear policies and strategies for moving forward.

Ramsey County has followed a series of solid waste master plans since the early 1980s. Each plan has led the transition to a more comprehensive waste management system. As a result, **Ramsey County operates with one of the highest performing waste management systems in the nation.**

### Get involved:

- [RamseyRecycles.com/masterplan](https://www.ramseyrecycles.com/masterplan)
- Share your ideas on Facebook at Ramsey County Minnesota, [#rc rethinkstrash](https://www.facebook.com/ramseycountymn)